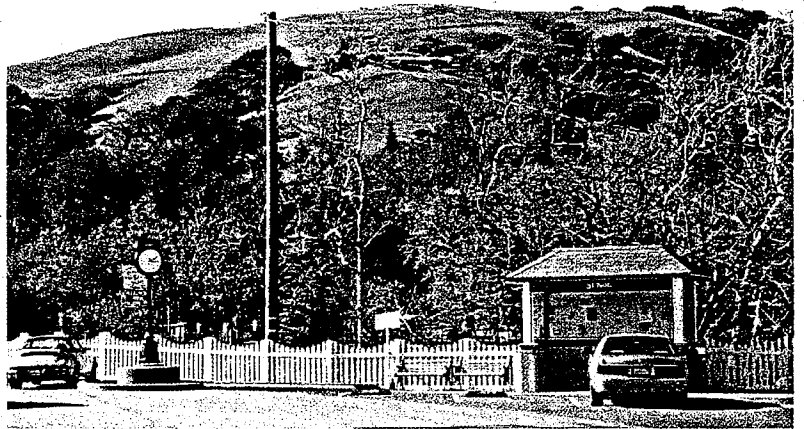


# Sunol Town Center Pedestrian Improvements *for a Livable Community*

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Prepared for:

**County of Alameda and  
Community of Sunol**

Prepared by:



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---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In the fall of 2000, the County of Alameda initiated a community-based planning process to study potential pedestrian and streetscape improvements in the town center of Sunol. The study was intended to help identify and design alternatives that could enhance pedestrian access, safety, and circulation in the downtown in order to create a more “livable community.” The aim of these enhancements are to improve the pedestrian connections to the town’s transit centers.

Funding for this project was made possible through a Transportation for Livable Communities Neighborhood Planning Grant received by the County of Alameda from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). This grant is part of the MTC’s Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC): Neighborhood Capital and Planning Grant Program.

This study was an offshoot of a larger project looking at transportation issues in the Niles Canyon Corridor between the City of Fremont and the City of Pleasanton. A consortium of local and regional bodies such as the County of Alameda, MTC, the Cities of Fremont and Pleasanton, and the town of Sunol were participants in this project. A MTC-TLC Planning grant for this project on the Niles Canyon Corridor area was not approved by the MTC, however. The MTC decided that a smaller study, focused on pedestrian improvements in and around the transit station in the town of Sunol was a more appropriate project.

Simultaneously, a larger region-wide “Smart Growth” study on the entire I-680 corridor is in progress. This study involves the MTC, Caltrans, Alameda County, local community organizations, in addition to all the communities and municipalities along Highway 680. The purpose of this project is to study and develop alternatives to the regional transportation problems affecting the region and the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

#### **TRANSPORTATION FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (TLC): NEIGHBORHOOD CAPITAL AND PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM**

The goal of the TLC program is to work with local communities to develop and plan for community-oriented transportation projects that can then compete at the regional scale for transportation funding. The TLC program is intended to encourage redevelopment efforts that add economic vitality to older business and community centers, encourage

pedestrian, bicycle and transit trips, provide for compact development, and enhance a community's mobility, identity and quality of life.

The MTC offers two different funding mechanisms as part of this program—TLC Planning Grants and TLC Neighborhood Capital Grants. Projects in the early or conceptual phase of development are eligible for Planning Grants, while projects with complete plans are eligible for Capital Grants that fund construction and implementation. This project has been funded through a TLC Planning Grant and is meant to produce a plan that can be used by the County of Alameda and the Town of Sunol to apply for a TLC Neighborhood Capital Grant.

The MTC funds TLC capital projects through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21). This Federal program gives the MTC approximately \$9 million to fund projects for fiscal year 2001. Eligible TLC capital projects include transportation improvements including streetscapes transit villages, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian plazas.

## PROJECT LOCATION

The town of Sunol is located in Alameda County between the South San Francisco Bay and Livermore Valley. It is situated within the eastern end of Niles Canyon. The City of Fremont is to the West and the City of Pleasanton is on the East. (See Figures 1 and 2)

The area now encompassing the town of Sunol was first developed in the mid 1800's by Antonio and Maria Sunol. Their son, Antonio Maria Sunol, built a ranch on the 14,000-acre property. The community began to grow as settlers attracted by the California Gold Rush began to establish themselves as farmers in the region.

During the late 1800's segments of the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads were built through the Niles Canyon to connect the cities of Sacramento and San Jose. Easily accessible by railroad, the town of Sunol soon became a popular vacation destination and continued to develop as an agricultural and recreational area. Much of the recreational activities ceased after WW II when summer retreat cabins became year-round housing due to the housing shortages in the Livermore-Amador Valley.<sup>1</sup>

The Southern Pacific railroad stopped operating in Sunol in 1984. In 1987, the Pacific Locomotive Association leased the rail right-of-way from the County and began operating a historic steam engine along



*Aerial Photo of Sunol*



*Train Station*

<sup>1</sup> DeGrange, Connie and Allen DeGrange. *A Place Called Sunol*. DeGrange Publishing

the Niles Canyon railway out of the train depot in the town center. The historic railway now operates on weekends and for special events, and attracts many outside visitors to the town center.

Sunol is a rural community with an approximate population of 1000 people. The town sits at the intersection of Niles Canyon and Foothill Roads. A network of rural roads connects residents to the town center situated along Main Street. Main Street connects to Niles Canyon Road at both the eastern and western edges of the town center.

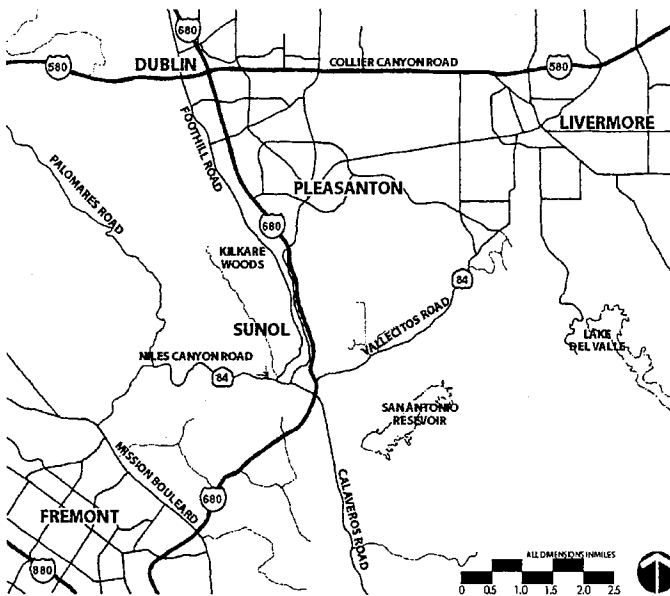


Figure 1: Location, Region

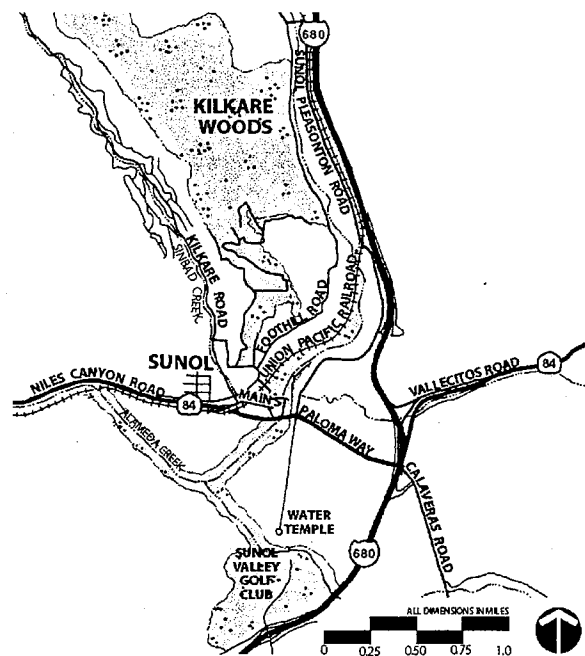


Figure 2: Location, Sunol

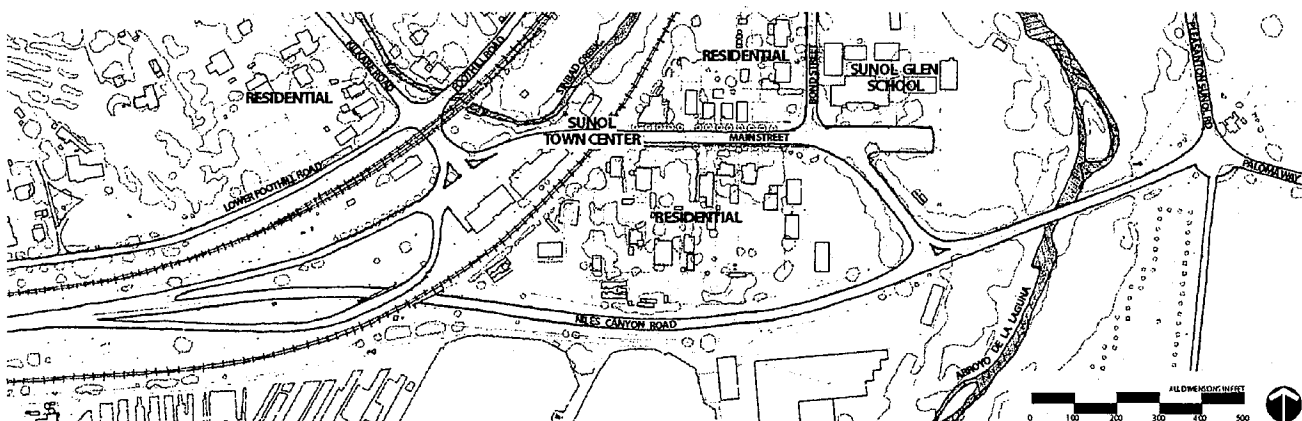


Figure 3: Project Area

## PLANNING PROCESS

In order to facilitate the involvement of the Sunol Community in the development of the Sunol town center pedestrian improvement concept plan, the following planning process was initiated. The planning process consisted of a series of four community meetings with both community members and County staff in attendance.

The planning process consisted of the following three stages and included public participation in each stage:

*Issues and Opportunities for Improvement:* The first meeting, held on November 16, 2000, identified the major issues, opportunities and constraints affecting traffic circulation and safety in the Sunol area.

*Evaluation of Alternatives for Pedestrian Improvements:* The community was given the opportunity to review pedestrian and streetscape improvement alternatives at the second and third meetings held on January 16, 2001 and February 28, 2001, respectively.

*Final Concept Plan Approval:* The community was unable to reach a consensus on the approach to the pedestrian improvements by the end of the third community meeting. A fourth meeting, organized by Robin Engeman, Chair of the Sunol Traffic Committee, was scheduled for March 14, ~~2002~~<sup>2001</sup>. The purpose of this fourth meeting was to review a preferred pedestrian improvement concept and to reach a consensus on the direction and approach for improving pedestrian safety and access in the Sunol town center. The community decided at this meeting to recommend to the County Board of Supervisors to proceed with a future MTC grant application.

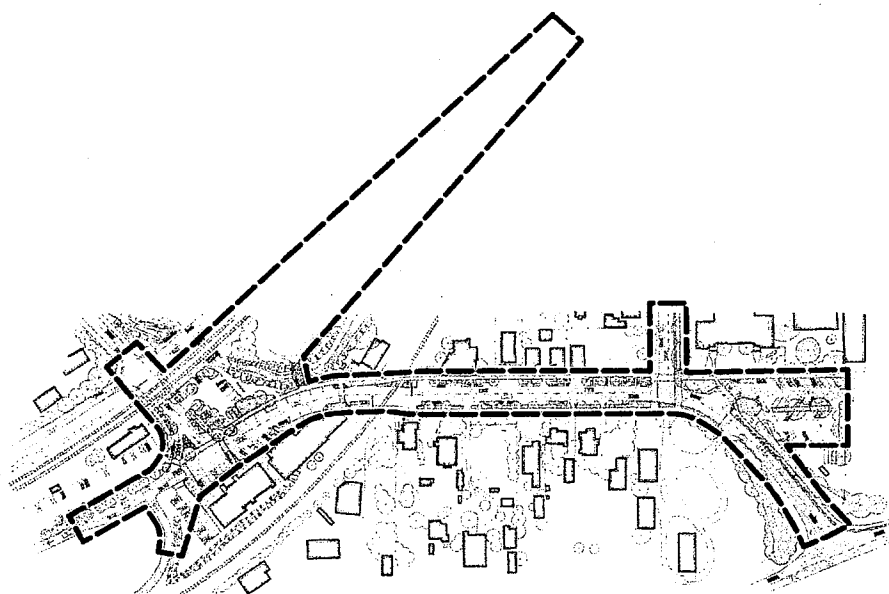
Summary reports of these meetings are found in Attachment B.

## RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

At present there are a number of different studies and planning processes in progress by the County of Alameda to address transportation issues in the region. The Sunol Community Study is intended to look at pedestrian circulation issues at the local level, while other studies are looking at larger, countywide transportation issues. The County, for example, is participating in a "Smart Growth" study focusing on the I-680 corridor. This study is looking at long-range traffic mitigation efforts to address the region's overall transportation and congestion issues.

In addition, Sunol residents have also been working with the County on overall traffic calming measures. They have formed a Traffic Committee, Train Committee, and the Sunol Review Board, all of which are working on various transportation-related efforts.

The purpose of this study is to focus on pedestrian safety and access issues within the Sunol town center. (See figure 4 for project boundaries)



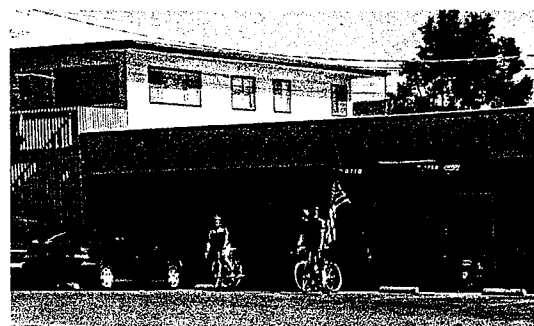
*Figure 4: Project Boundary*

## EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The town of Sunol's location in the Niles Canyon at the nexus of two major roads that form one of the only east-west connections from I-680 to the East Bay, is the root of many of the town's traffic and circulation problems. As a result, the town experiences heavy traffic and congestion during morning and afternoon commute hours.

In addition to this heavy weekday congestion, Sunol also experiences heavy traffic on weekends or during special events when visitors come into the town center to ride the historic train.

Sunol is also a favorite of bicycle riders who come to ride the area's many scenic trails and roads.



*Bicyclists in front of General Store*



## **IMPLEMENTATION**

A three-pronged implementation strategy is necessary to attack the multiple objectives of this plan. The pedestrian safety problems found in the Sunol town center are interrelated with overall regional traffic issues and must therefore be addressed at different levels. The following is the recommended three-pronged approach:

1. Make pedestrian and streetscape improvements locally. Funding can be retained by applying for the TLC Neighborhood Capital Grant.
2. Work with the County of Alameda and local associations to promote and develop county-wide traffic calming measures.
3. Work with the County, MTC, and other local and regional jurisdictions to address overall I-680 corridor regional transportation issues.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This study identified local pedestrian and streetscape improvements as described in the site plan and in the report. The following steps are necessary for the implementation of the concept plan:

- ♦ Apply for the MTC TLC Capital Neighborhood Capital Grant
- ♦ Hire design/engineering firm to develop construction drawings and to meet with community to review the improvement plans
- ♦ Bid for construction
- ♦ Select contractor
- ♦ Complete construction

## **HIGH PRIORITY ACTIONS:**

- ♦ Connect pedestrian pathways along Main Street from Sunol Glen Elementary School to train depot and Foothill Road, including any necessary modifications to the roadway
- ♦ Complete improvements to the public parking lots at Sunol Glen Elementary and train stations, including the construction of bicycle racks
- ♦ Enhance character of community to maintain the rustic, small-town atmosphere with:
  - Pedestrian amenities
  - Park benches
  - Landscaping
  - Selectively replacing existing street lights with appropriate pedestrian-scale lighting

## **Appendix A: Cost Estimates**

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**Downtown Sunol****PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION COSTS - Budget Estimate**

Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.

Revised 3/21/2001

DESCRIPTION	QUANT.	UNIT	COST	TOTAL
Demolition & Site Preparation	39,000	sf	\$1	\$39,000
Decomposed Granite Paths	12,000	sf	\$3.00	\$36,000
Decomposed Granite Bike Path (through staging area to Foothill & Bond intersection)	5,400	sf	\$3.00	\$16,200
Decomposed Granite Parking Area	8,000	sf	\$3.50	\$28,000
Concrete Curb	450	lf	\$12	\$5,400
Textured Concrete Walkway & Curb at School	1	ls	\$11,000	\$11,000
Bollards (6" x 6" wood)	9	ea	\$200	\$1,800
Benches	10	ea	\$1,200	\$12,000
Bike Racks	4	ea	\$300	\$1,200
Wheel Stops	29	ea	\$80	\$2,320
Painting Crosswalks	15	ea	\$250	\$3,750
Grading at Kilcare & Foothill	1	ls	\$2,000	\$2,000
Landscaping	13,000	sf	\$2.50	\$32,500
Roadway Construction	1	ls	\$13,000	\$13,000
SUBTOTAL				\$165,170
15% Contractor's O & P				\$24,776
Subtotal				\$189,946
20% Contingency				\$37,989
CONSTRUCTION COST TOTAL				\$227,935
15% Design/Construction Documents				\$34,190
TOTAL COST				\$262,125

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS	QUANT.	UNIT	COST	TOTAL
Irrigation	13,000	sf	\$1.00	\$13,000
Water Service (with irrigation)	1	ls	\$1,500	\$1,500
Rumble Strips per intersection		ls	\$30,000	
Pedestrian Lights		ea	\$2,500	
Boulders in Dividers (12" dia.)		ea	\$100	
Decomposed Granite Bike Path on Kilcare		sf	\$3	
Pedestrian Bridge (with existing foundation)	1	ls	\$27,000	\$27,000

## **Appendix B: Community Meeting Summary Reports**

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# MEETING NOTES

*Project:* Sunol Community Study

*Date:* December 8, 2000

*Subject:* Focus Group Meeting #1

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A focus group meeting of the Sunol Community Study was held on November 16, 2000 at Sunol Glen School from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. This meeting was the first in a series of meetings to be held to study potential pedestrian circulation and streetscape improvements in the vicinity of the Sunol town commercial center and the rail depot. Future improvements could enhance pedestrian access, safety and circulation in town businesses area.

Approximately 15 community members were in attendance, including County staff. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project and process to the community members in attendance and ask for input on major issues, opportunities and constraints affecting pedestrian circulation and safety in the area.

Dan Bradfield of Alameda County Public Works Agency (ACPWA) welcomed participants and gave a brief history and overview of the funding process for the project. Mr. Bradfield explained that the County recently received a special grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for this study. The study is intended for the community to help identify and design possible pedestrian circulation improvements in the Town of Sunol in the commercial and train depot area. The findings of this study could be used to apply for additional grant monies for construction of the improvements.

Mr. Bradfield then introduced D. Paul Tuttle of Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc, a planning and design, consulting firm retained by the County to help the community in developing the potential improvement plans. Mr. Tuttle explained that the consultant team would assist the community in developing possible pedestrian improvements for the area and providing design concept drawings and a summary report that could be used for further grant applications such as special Transportation Grants for Community Livability.

Paul Tuttle facilitated a discussion with the community participants to identify issues, assets, concerns and suggestions about the Sunol study area. Mukul Malhotra, also of MIG, graphically recorded comments on a large wall-sized sheet of paper. The "wall-graphic" is included at the end of this report.

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## **II. ASSETS**

The major assets as enunciated by the participants were:

- Rustic, small town rural atmosphere
- Clean Streets
- Great place to bike

The participants emphasized that the small town rural character of Sunol was its strongest asset and any pedestrian improvements to the site should not change this character.

## **III. ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The major issues identified by the participants were:

### **Pedestrian Safety and Circulation**

- Pedestrian safety is a concern on weekends when train visitors walk along Main Street and particularly at the intersections of Main Street, Kilcare, Foothill, and Railroad Avenue.

### **Auto Traffic and Circulation**

- Main Street congestion with bumper-to-bumper traffic during commute hours is a problem because people try to avoid traffic congestion on Niles Road use Main Street as a bypass.
- High-speed traffic (50 miles/hr and over) on Main Street makes it unsafe for pedestrian crossings.
- Due to backed up traffic on Main street accessing the south parking lot at the depot becomes difficult.
- People do not adhere to traffic 'stop' signs especially at the intersection of Main Street and the Niles Road off ramp.

### **Bicycle Safety and Circulation**

- Lack of staging area for the huge numbers of bicyclists during weekends and sponsored events creates problems of congestion and safety.
- No parking for cyclists

### **Public Restrooms**

- Lack of public restrooms for bicyclists created a nuisance for Main Street retail merchants.

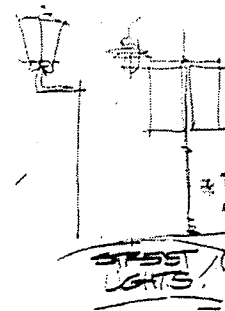
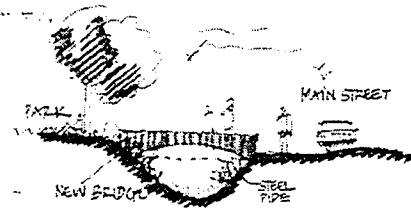
The major issue for pedestrian circulation and safety is improving the connections from the Train Depot to Main Street. In particular the intersection of Main Street, Kilcare Road and Foothill Road are a hazard for pedestrians on the weekends during train functions. Pedestrians, auto access to the train depot parking lot, and turning movements at the intersection create conflicts between pedestrian and autos.

#### IV. SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Participants in the meeting brainstormed a number of potential improvements to the Sunol area that could address the identified issues and opportunities. Community members also pointed out that Sunol has a number of community groups working on traffic and circulation issues. They recommended that these pedestrian enhancements should be coordinated with improvement alternatives now being explored by these other groups.

##### Sunol Town Commercial Area

- Explore pedestrian bridge across creek from park area to Main Street. Use existing footings next to the steel pipe as a structural member for the new bridge.
- Put a ramp at entrance of a footbridge.
- Explore the possibility of bike paths on Main Street.
- Provide staging area for bicyclists. Explore possibility of putting this site near the Sunol Glen School.
- Create handicap accessible walkways in front of General Store for improved pedestrian access.
- Bikes should not be allowed on Calaverous Road. Restrict bike paths to Niles Canyon Road.
- Welcome bicyclists to Main Street as visitors and not as cyclists.
- Speed humps (3"high, 60"wide) proposed at dangerous intersections to calm traffic.
- Provide new Main Street streetlights (The new designs could be like at Niles Canyon).
- Develop parking lot southwest of General Store. Grading the land may further increase the parking spaces.
- Improve intersection of Main and Kilkare Road to reduce speeding and improve pedestrian safety.
- Create t-intersection at the off-ramp onto Main Street with stop sign.
- Improve access to the train depot parking lot.
- Improve pedestrian connections from the depot to the commercial uses on Main Street.
- Incorporate pedestrian crosswalks from the Depot to the Main Street commercial stores without reducing the number of parking spaces on the street.





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In general, traffic congestion along Niles Canyon Road is particularly heavy during commute times creating additional congestion on Main Street, which is used as a bypass by many commuters. In addition, community members pointed out that turning left off of Main Street onto Niles Canyon Road intersection is particularly difficult. Traffic is moving fast and heavy along Niles Canyon Road leaving little time for left turn movements.

#### **Four Corners Area – Water Temple Area**

Community members also identified pedestrian improvements in the four corners area.

- Explore a 'round-a-bout' to calm traffic at the 'four corners' intersection.
- Install a stop sign or traffic signal at 'four corners' junction of Niles Canyon Road. This could help traffic/vehicular safety
- Restore pillars at the 'four corners' intersection of Niles Canyon Road. Historic pictures of the area show how they were located. Replace two new pillars to complement the existing two.
- Improve trail to Water Temple. The existing bridge can be used to serve this purpose. Explore new bridge across the creek to the south.

### **III. NEXT STEPS**

It was proposed that Paul Tuttle would meet with various committee groups such as the Sunol Traffic & Parking Committee, the Train Organization, etc as well various resource persons (County Traffic Engineer Bob Preston) to coordinate and integrate objectives of the various community groups into the study report.

Alternative improvement solutions incorporating the various issues, concerns and observations made by meeting participants as well as those of the other committees would then be presented at a community wide town meeting for review and consideration.

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# M E E T I N G   N O T E S

*Project:* Sunol Community Study

*Date:* February 13, 2001

*Subject:* Community Workshop, January 16, 2001

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On January 16, 2001 the second in a series of community meetings in connection with the Sunol Community Study was held at the Sunol Glen School. Approximately 30 community members and Alameda County staff attended the workshop to continue the discussion of Downtown Sunol's study of potential pedestrian circulation and streetscape improvements. The focus of the town study is to look at areas of enhanced pedestrian access, safety and circulation in the area of the town center.

The purpose of this second meeting was to review and discuss alternatives to pedestrian circulation and streetscape improvement in the town center area.

Paul Tuttle of Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., moderated the meetings. Mr. Tuttle welcomed the participants and gave a brief history and overview of the Sunol project. Mr. Tuttle explained the study was funded by a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The study is intended to design of possible pedestrian circulation improvements in the commercial town center and train depot areas of Downtown Sunol. The study will help represent community needs and recommendations for future construction of the improvements.

One alternative developed from input from the first workshop was presented to the participants for discussion. Mr. Tuttle facilitated a discussion with the community participants that built on the input provided from the last workshop. Community participants identified issues, assets, concerns and suggestions for improvements. Mukul Malhotra of MIG graphically recorded the session on large wall paper. The photo-reduction of this recording is included at the end of this report.

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## II. ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The major issues identified by the participants were:

### *Public Outreach for Meetings*

- The community workshop was not well advertised. Better outreach needs to be implemented.
- The community should be included in all future meetings in community process.

### *Auto Traffic and Circulation*

- The heavy traffic on Foothill Road is estimated at 4,000 vehicles each day. The heaviest time of traffic is the morning commute time (approximately 3,000 vehicles).
- A major issue is the traffic congestion during commute hours.
- A balance is needed between keeping traffic off of Foothill Road while tending to the demands of commuters from Tracy and Modesto.
- The route between Pleasanton and Sunol is underutilized – traffic could be diverted through this route.
- Four general areas for parking have been provided for the train station.
- Vehicles should be prevented from making left turns at Bernal Road.

### *Transportation Corridor*

- The original railroad area is considered a transportation corridor. The staging area of the town's center is naturally bent towards a transportation center.
- How long is the lease for the transportation staging area?
- The traffic through the corridor picks up from Livermore. Commuters use the corridor as the shortest route to Tracy. Commuters going to Stoneridge/Bernal also use the corridor as an alternative to Hwy. 680.

### *Pedestrian and Traffic Safety*

- Pedestrian safety is a major concern due to the heavy traffic on the main roads, especially on Kilcare Road.
- Pedestrian safety should be ensured not only during daily commute hours but also during special events.
- It is becoming more difficult to get in and out of driveways in residential areas because of the heavy traffic flow on Foothill Road.
- There is a concern for children's safety on Bond Street, which becomes an alternative route when Foothill Road becomes congested.
- The stop sign at Kilcare and Foothill roads is not adhered to. Visibility of the sign and intersection needs to be improved.
- Need to enforce the traffic laws.
- Employ traffic controllers for school, pedestrian and heavy traffic areas.

### *Noise*

- Traffic noise, especially from loud motorcycle engines, in the town center is annoying.

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### *Train Station*

- The train station has been a significant imposition on Downtown Sunol, especially on parking lots.

### *Intersection Traffic Controls*

Based on the general concept shown to the participants, the emphasis was the improvement of intersection traffic calming and flow control. Participants would like to see stop lights and/or stop light improvements at the following intersections:

- Kilcare Road and Main Street
- Kilcare and Foothill roads
- Bond Street and Foothill Road
- Main Street and Bond Street
- Niles Canyon Road and Main Street (at peak hours)
- Sunol Four Corners

## **III. SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

Workshop participants reviewed the pedestrian improvement alternative for Sunol's town center (Alternative A). Participants were asked to give their comments, suggestions, and additional ideas.

### *Loading Zones*

- Provide an off-loading zone for trucks at the outer edges of Main Street – possibly, the Sunol Lounge area.
- Integrate the off-loading zone for trucks in designated street parking areas.
- Delivery trucks needing access on Main Street and Downtown Sunol should have adequate off-loading zone areas.
- Enforce designated parking areas for delivery trucks – they park over the white lines.

### *Parking*

- Provide better parking in the center of town.
- General parking should not be allowed at Sunol Lounge. The area should be designated commercial-only parking for trucks.
- Parking located in front of commercial buildings should be angled better.

### *Four Corners Area*

- Rationalize the traffic flow at the four corners area.
- A roundabout can be an alternative to a stop light at the four corners area.
- Provide monument entry features.

### *Niles Canyon Road*

- Explore the opportunities of designating Niles Canyon Road as a scenic highway.
- Note: Niles Canyon Road is designated as the bypass to 680.

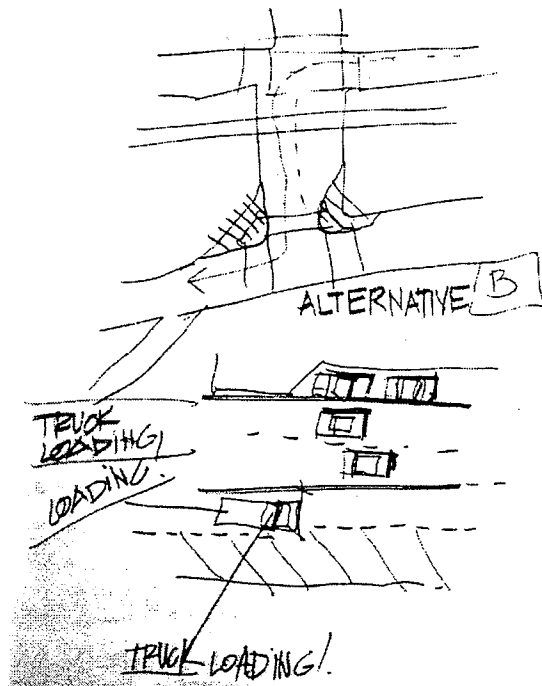
### *Other Suggestions*

- All crosswalks and sidewalks should incorporate design accessibility.
- Replace the yield sign at Main Street and Niles Canyon ramp to a stop sign.
- The intersection at Main Street and Niles Canyon ramp should be narrowed/channeled.
- Event organizers should be responsible for controlling the pedestrian and traffic flow during events.

### **IV. ALTERNATIVE B**

During the discussion, a second alternative was developed from community input, which was labeled Alternative B. A free-hand drawing (see right) shows the intersection of Kilcare and Main Street, which currently has corner space for free right turns. Participants would like to see the corners extended to make full right turns at the intersection.

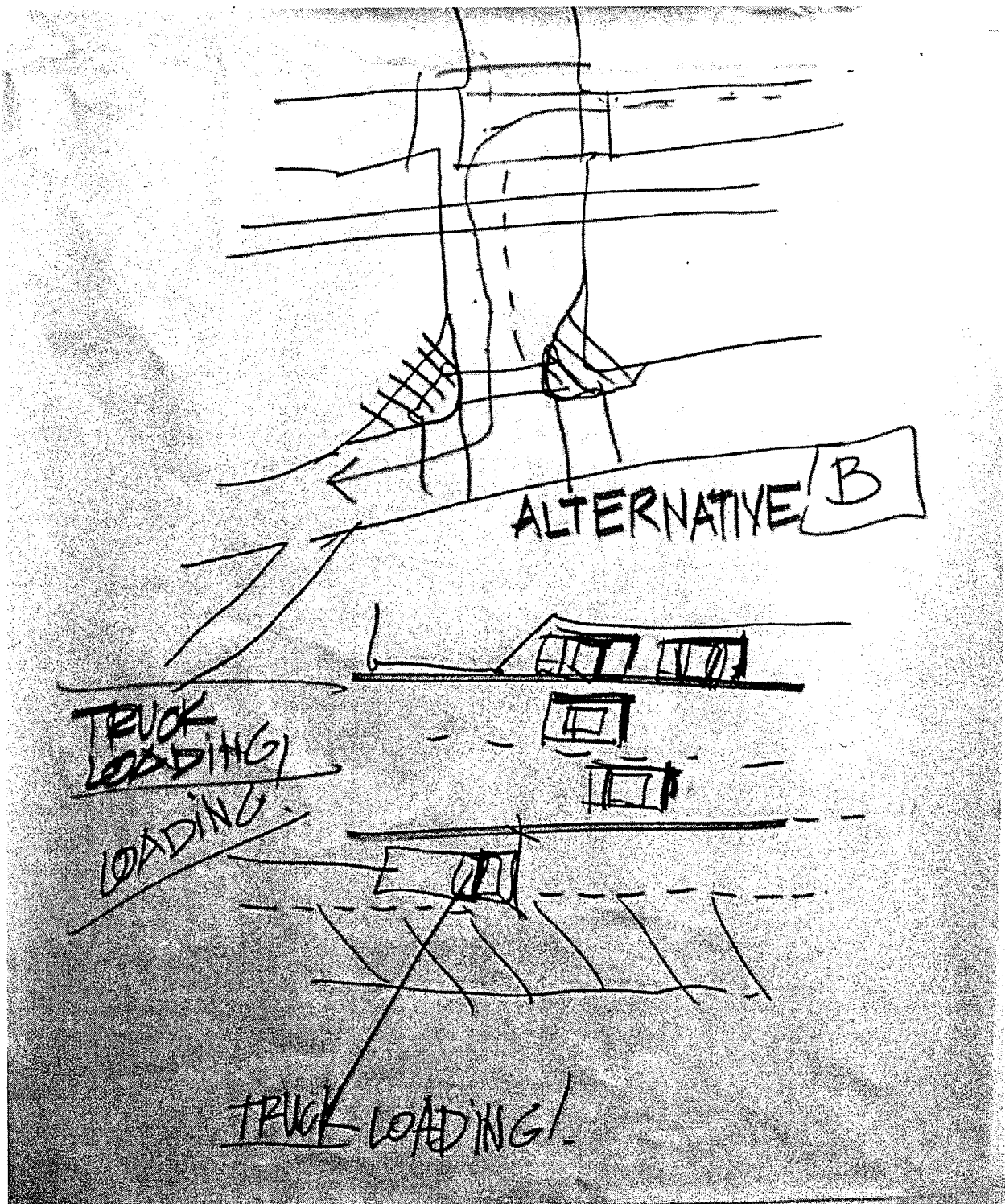
The discussion continued regarding truck loading space in the town center. There was a concern that the trucks stopping in front of commercial buildings block traffic. A space should be provided between the preferred angled parking and the roadway for truck stopping and loading. Although parked cars may be temporarily blocked, the traffic flow would not be affected.

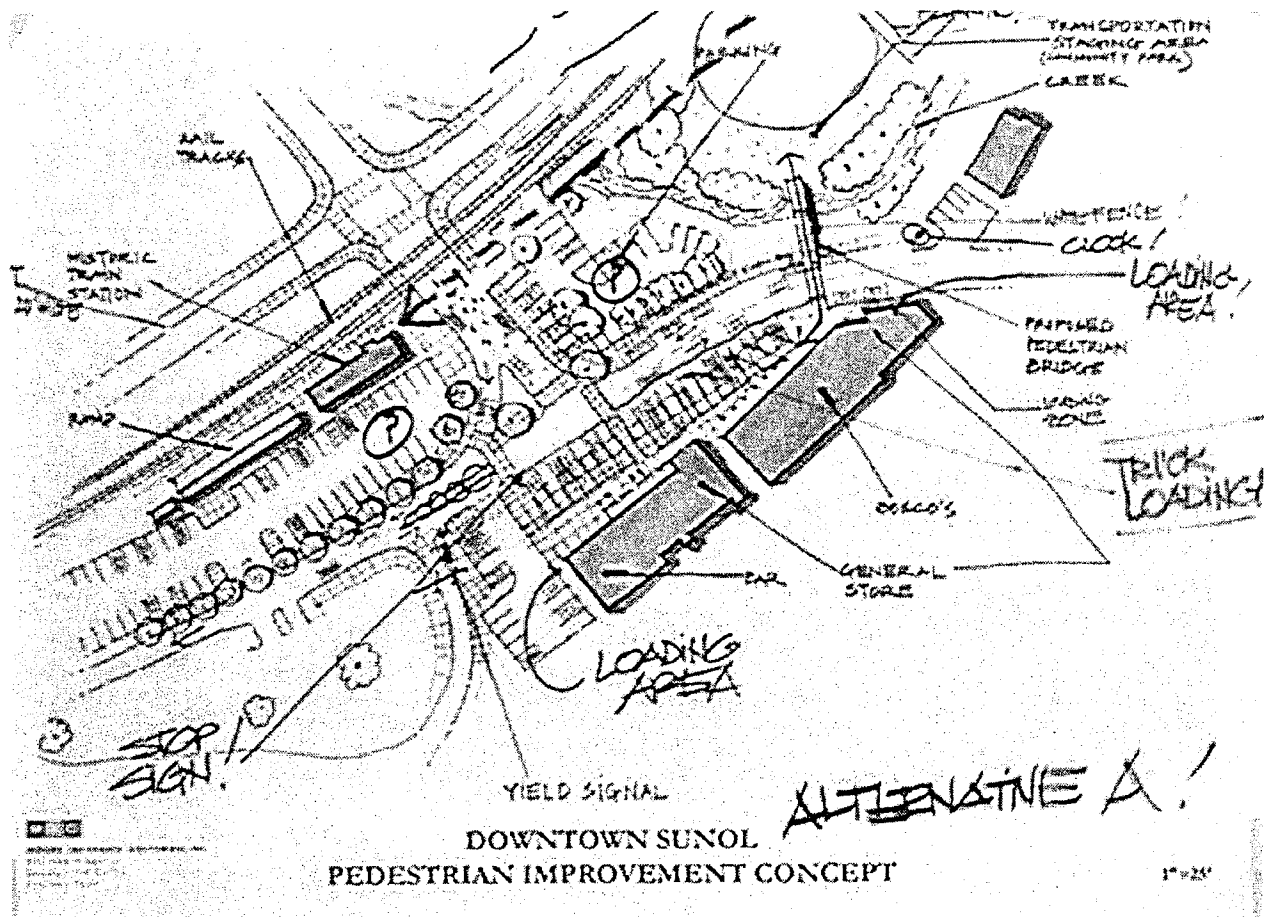


MIG should also include an area-wide view of traffic issues related to pedestrian safety of Sunol's Main Street. These are the intersections of Kilcare Road and Main Street, Kilcare and Foothill roads, Bond Street and Foothill Road, Main Street and Bond Street, Niles Canyon Road and Main Street, and the Sunol Four Corners.

### **V. NEXT STEPS**

- Summarize community input.
- Review alternatives with County engineers.
- Advertise next community workshop with signs and mailers.
- Present overall concept with regional traffic issues at the next community workshop.
- Finalize Concept Plan and submit to MTC for future funding.







Hand-drawn conceptual sketch of Sunol Town Center, showing various urban planning notes and site features. The sketch includes the following text annotations:

- "MAINTAIN 'RURAL CHARACTER' IMAGE"
- "LARGER TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUE"
- "STOP SIGN"
- "CONSOLIDATE SIGNS"
- "NO STREETLIGHTS" "SUBDUED LIGHTING" "SAFETY"
- "SLOW MARKERS"
- "RED SIGN"
- "JUST A LABEL" "LOADING AREA"
- "VIN-PR CUSTOM"
- "NO SIDEWALKS ON PARK" "POSSIBLE STREET LEVEL CROSSING" "GRANITE MONUMENTAL SIGNAGE"
- "TRAFFIC IS THE PROBLEM"
- "EMERGENCY ACCESS"
- "POWER POLES"
- "PLAN/PROCESS ADDRESSES SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS"
- "PARKING SIGNS"
- "DIRECTIONAL"

The sketch also depicts various building footprints, parking areas, and street layouts, with some areas labeled "GENERAL STORE" and "KIOSKS".

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# MEETING NOTES

*Project:* Sunol Community Study

*Date:* February 28, 2001

*Subject:* Community Meeting #3

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes a community meeting that was held at Sunol Glen School on February 28, 2001 from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. The meeting was the third in a series of meetings to be held to study potential pedestrian circulation and streetscape improvements in the vicinity of the Sunol town center.

Approximately 25 community members were in attendance, including Alameda County staff. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed pedestrian streetscape improvements.

Dan Bradfield of Alameda County Public Works Agency (ACPWA) welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda of the meeting. Mr. Bradfield gave a brief history and overview of the funding of the project which is being provided by a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) grant. He explained that the focus of the town study is to redesign pedestrian circulation improvements in the town center and area's of Downtown Sunol. The study will present community needs and recommendations for a future MTC grant application for construction of the improvements.

Mr. Bradfield then introduced D. Paul Tuttle of Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc., a planning, design and consulting firm retained by the County to help the community to develop the improvement plan. Mr. Tuttle explained that the consultant team's role is to assist the community to develop possible pedestrian improvements for the area by providing design concept drawings, and a summary report that could be used for further grant applications—the MTC grant for Transportation in Livable Communities (TLC). During the discussion, Mr. Tuttle presented two alternative plans for pedestrian streetscape improvements, and explained the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The proposed streetscape improvements were developed with input received from community members in the first town community meeting. The proposed pedestrian improvements represent the consensus of opinions received from the community and County staff on the best approaches and direction for design. The major objectives of the design improvements are to increase safety for pedestrians, reduce the speeding traffic while maintaining the "rural character of the community."

Paul Tuttle facilitated a discussion of the community to identify issues, concerns, and suggestions about the Sunol study area. Mukul Malhotra, also of MIG, graphically recorded comments on a large wall-sized sheet of paper. The "wall-graphic" and alternatives are included at the end of this report.

## **II. ISSUES AND CONCERNS TO ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED**

Workshop participants reviewed the Pedestrian Streetscape Improvement Alternatives 1 and 2 presented to them by MIG. The participants identified issues and concerns about the two alternatives. Specific comments included:

### **General**

- Railroad Avenue on the drawings should be correctly labeled as Lower Foothill Road.
- The plan urbanizes Downtown Sunol

### **Streetscape Improvements**

- Use slow markers (cobble stones) on Foothill road intersection
- Survey emergency exits, fire hydrants, lighting fixtures, power poles, etc in the study area.
- Squaring the intersection of Kilcare and Main Streets would also improve pedestrian safety.
- There should be designated 'walk able' areas, or footpaths, which should not be shown as concrete sidewalks with curbs.
- The Bond and Main intersection should be 'included in the design improvements and tied in' with the MTC grant as a source of funding.

### **Parking and Circulation**

- Directional signs to public parking areas should be highlighted.
- Signage that directs drivers to parking near the exit ramp of Niles Canyon Road and Main Street entrance should be bolder.
- Retain emergency access into the Train Depot Parking lot from Kilcare road.
- The plan may create bigger traffic jams
- Parking should not be extended.
- Placing Stop signs at the Kilcare and Foothill intersection is not advisable.

## **II. PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS**

The participants also suggested several areas of pedestrian improvements in the Sunol Downtown Area:

### **Pedestrian Safety and Circulation**

- Some participants suggested traffic calming measures at the particularly dangerous intersection of Kilcare and Foothill, such as narrowing the intersection, or using stop signs or cobblestones to slow traffic.
- The intersection of Foothill and Bond is unsafe, especially for students at the nearby school. The participants noted that the intersection is too wide, which promotes speeding, and that it will considerably worsen in the future.
- Pedestrian access from parking lots to commercial areas and residences should be made safer and more comfortable.
- There is a need for improved street lighting on Main Street
- Shoulder restoration (e.g. improved grading) would improve pedestrian safety.
- Many participants favored building a bridge across the creek, connecting the park area to Main Street. Foundations for the proposed bridge already exist.

### **Auto Traffic and Circulation**

- Explore traffic study to look at bigger picture of the traffic problems experienced by the residents of Sunol. The traffic committee formed by the residents of Sunol should be used as a first resource.
- Bike paths on Calaverous Road should continue to remain and not be removed, as suggested in the previous second community meeting held on January 16th.

### **Lighting**

- While some felt that streetlights are not needed, others highlighted that the town center area is unsafe to walk at night, especially for children.
- Lighting should be subdued, closer to the ground, and appropriately spaced.
- Lighting should softly illuminate the ground.

### **Signage**

- In general, there is a need for appropriate signage for various parking lots.
- The Post Office parking lot is not an appropriate place to park for people using the restaurants.
- The present signage is inadequate— “20-minute” parking limit sign not visible.
- New signs should be placed at the post office prohibiting commercial customers from using the post office’s parking lot.
- People who misuse the post office parking lot should be ticketed.

### **Image and Character:**

- Maintain Sunol’s rural character. Concrete sidewalks and curbs conflicts with this image.
- Wooden sidewalks are a promising alternative, particularly because they are safe and walk able; while at the same time contribute to the desired rural character.
- Decomposed Granite, simple shoulder improvements are other possible alternatives.
- “Old style” streetlights should be placed on Main Street, in keeping with the rustic character of Sunol.

### **Community Participation Process:**

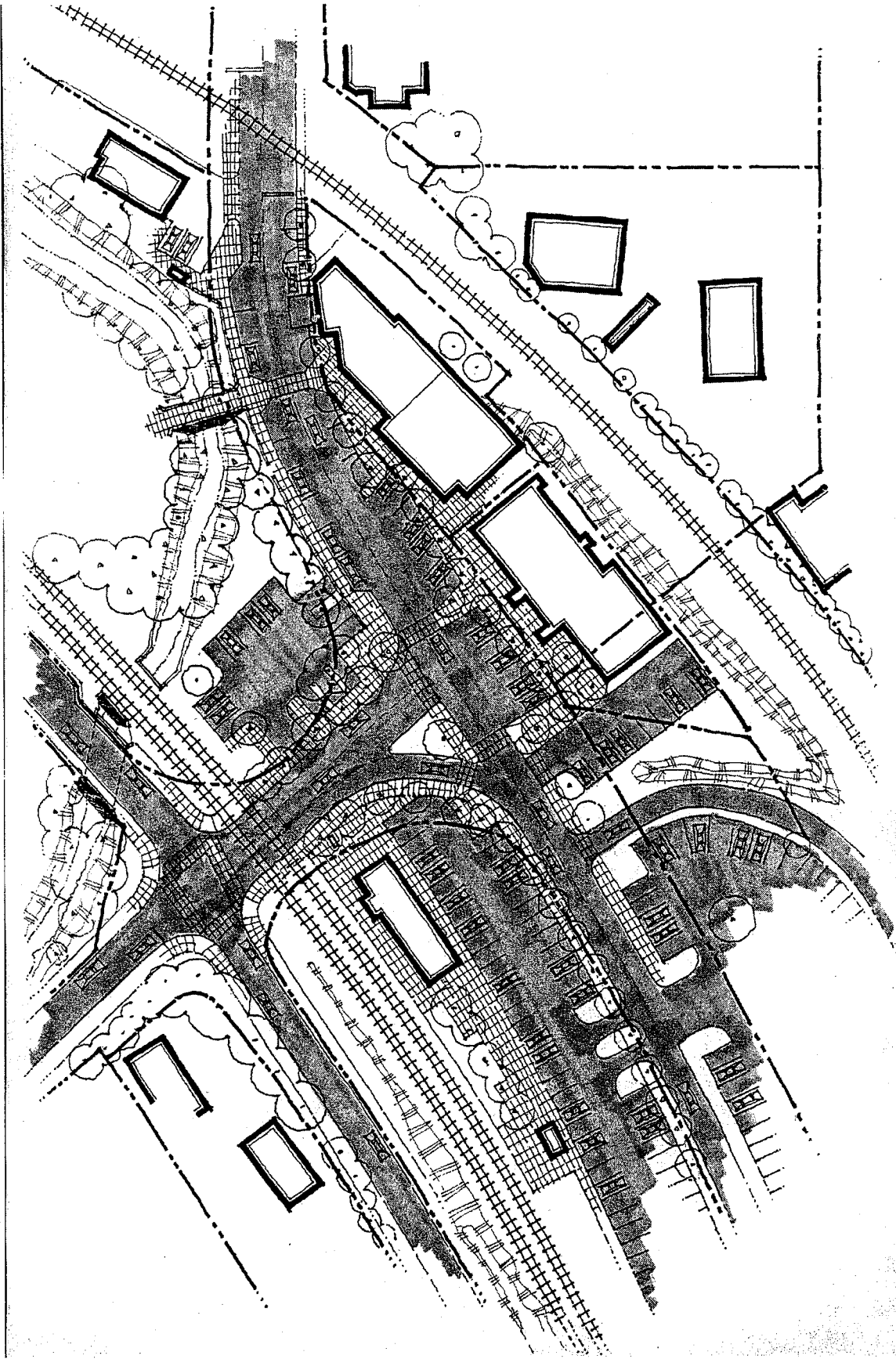
- A community consensus is needed in order to set a time frame for pedestrian safety improvements.
- The participants suggested that the County should manage the volume of traffic coming through Sunol first. However county officials suggested that the traffic improvements should be seen as independent of the pedestrian improvements suggested in this study.

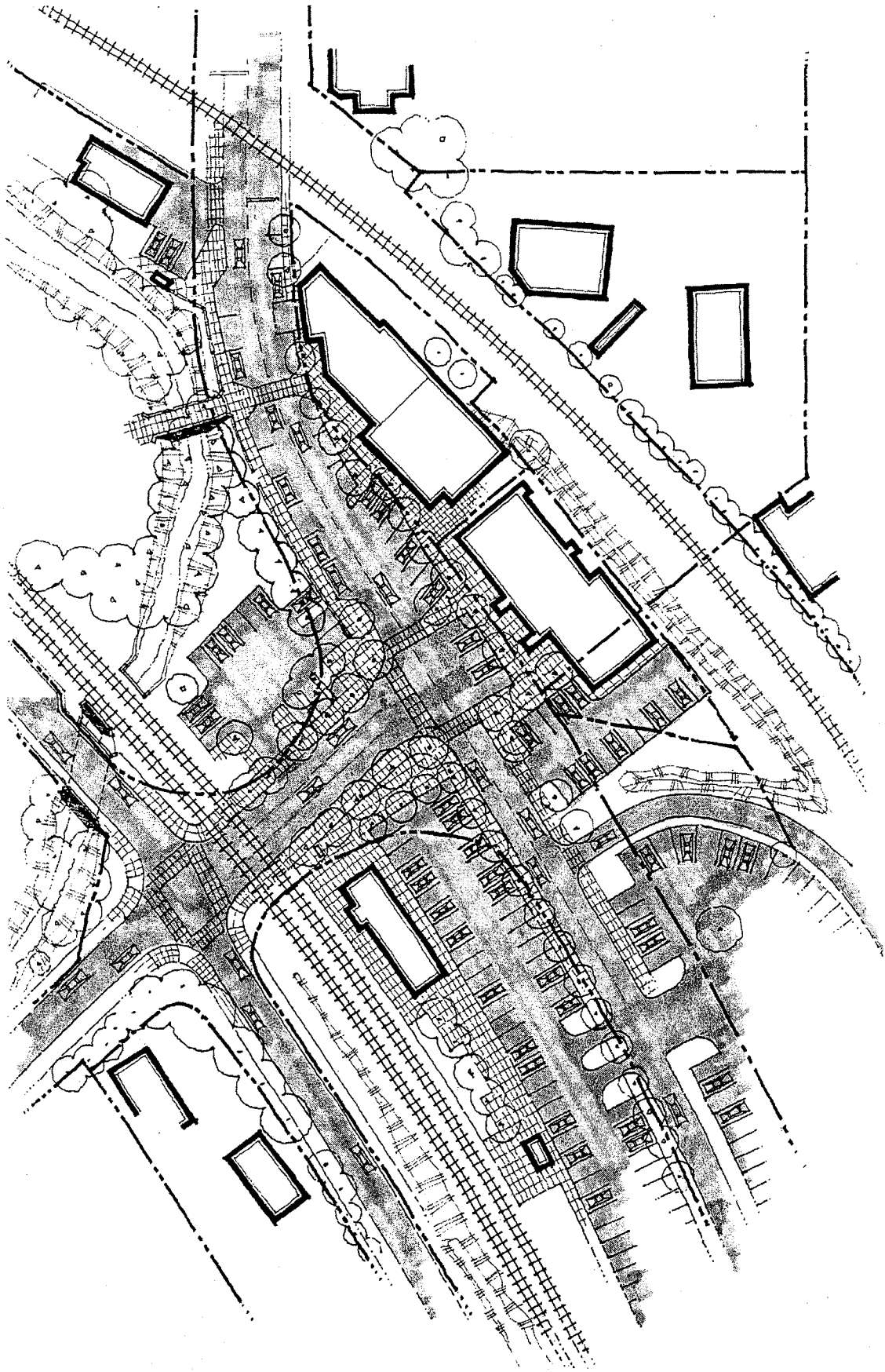
### **Organizational Issues**

- At present there are a number of different community committees and county studies working in the Sunol Downtown area such as the Traffic Committee, Train Committee, and the Sunol Review Board.
- There has been inadequate communication between the various committees and the county sponsored studies that need to be improved.
- The different committees perhaps need to be consolidated with the Sunol Review Board.
- The participants expressed frustration with the lack of feedback and progress about the traffic studies conducted by the county, which was petitioned by the residents.
- Mr. Preston of the County addressed the community by suggesting that time permitting, he would develop traffic-calming alternatives and bring them before the community for discussion.

## **IV. NEXT STEPS**

It was proposed that MIG would revise the alternatives presented to incorporate the suggestions of the community. The new pedestrian improvement study area prepared for the MTC would 'tie in' the Bond and Main Street intersection. These would be then presented to the community on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at the final community wide town meeting for their review and consideration. The purpose of this final meeting was to review the revised improvement plans and reach a consensus in the direction of for further MTC grant applications.







MOORE IACOFANO GOLTSMAN, INC.

## Memorandum

**Date:** 03/26/2001

**To:** Dan Bradfield, Alameda County Department of Public Works

**From:** David Paul Tuttle, AICP, Director of Community Design

**Re:** Sunol Community Meeting Summary, March 14, 2001

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The following is a summary of the major directions agreed to by the community participants at the March 14, 2001 Sunol Community Meeting. The Sunol Traffic Committee sponsored the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the proposed pedestrian improvement concept for the Town of Sunol and make recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors to proceed to the next phase—application for a capital construction grant to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) grant program. The meeting was held at the Sunol Glen Elementary School community room and approximately 38 persons were in attendance.

After a short presentation by MIG on the proposed pedestrian concept plan, the community discussed additional changes and recommendations. The changes to the plan agreed upon by the participants are as follows:

1. Move the mid-block pedestrian crosswalks east along Main street toward the post office.
2. Remove full intersection crosswalks at the Main and Niles Canyon Road intersection. These crosswalks will only be needed in the future if additional pedestrian access is provided to the Water Temple across the creek.
3. Provide additional mid-block crosswalk markers on Kilcare near the rail tracks with access to the footbridge to the community park (Transportation Staging Area).
4. Remove pedestrian paths on the West side of Main street from Bond to Niles Canyon Road. These paths are not necessary at this time and can be added in the future if additional pedestrian access is provided to the Water Temple.

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5. Include the pedestrian path through the Community Park area with connections to the parking area at Bond St.
6. Do not include the future pedestrian bridge over the Sinbad Creek as part of the Grant application. This is a future improvement that can be funded by other community efforts.
7. Replace existing lighting fixtures with smaller, pedestrian-scaled fixtures with an appropriate subdued and shielded light source. These new lighting fixtures should be selected to reflect the historic rural character of the community.
8. Add stop signs as part of the concept plan at the Niles Canyon Road off-ramp at Main Street.
9. The intersection of Main St. and Kilkare Road should use the Option B Plan with the dedicated right turn lane of Kilkare Road to the Niles Road off ramp. Removal of this dedicated right turn lane is an option in a future improvement phase if and when regional traffic congestion is resolved, reducing the amount of cut-through traffic from Foothill Road.
10. All stop sign locations will be designated in the Concept Plan.
11. The Concept Plan only covers pedestrian and circulation improvements within the public right-of-way.
12. The design of the Post Office street frontage should be reorganized to preserve the number of existing parking spaces at the post office. This reorganization will require maintaining a wider driveway opening with a painted pedestrian crosswalk from the Community Clock to the Rail Road Crossing to the east on Main Street.

The community discussed their concerns relating to traffic and circulation issues, as well as issues surrounding the community participation process. Some participants recommended the inclusion of a public restroom in the Community Park area (Transportation Staging Area) as part of the grant application. Sunol is in need of a public restroom facility.

Participants also discussed the process for the grant application and the pros and cons of applying for the capital improvement grant.

In addition, participants discussed the process of developing the concept plan and the benefits of the proposed improvements. A major objective of the improvements is to provide pedestrian safety and access for all Sunol residents and not limit the improvements to the commercial area. These pedestrian and streetscape changes would improve the "livability" of the community, and extend from the Sunol Glen Elementary School Parking area through the town to the commercial area, including the Bond Street intersection and the Kilkare-Foothill Road intersections.

Following the discussion, the meeting participants voted on the recommended Pedestrian Improvement Plan. Only Sunol residents were asked to vote. Two motions were proposed and voted on.

The first motion was to not proceed with the MTC-TLC grant application at this time. Four (4) community members voted in favor of the motion. The motion failed.

The second motion was to proceed with the MTC-TLC grant application and the proposed concept plan as amended with the above agreed upon changes, subject to a select sub-committee review and approval of the application and changes in the concept plan with the County Public Works Department prior to final submittal. The MTC grant submittal deadline is March 29, 2001. The second motion passed unanimously. Twenty-four (24) residents voted for the motion.

The select review sub-committee will include: Bob, Robin, Jim and Al. (Note: Last names were not identified).

The meeting was closed at 9:30 p.m.